GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:197
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2002
IMPORT OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES
A. VENKATESH NAIK;CHANDRA NATH SINGH;PUTTASWAMY GOWDA

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of agricultural commodities is permissible under Open General Licence;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the agricultural commodities imported alongwith their quantity and value during the current financial year till December 31, 2001;

(d) whether the Government have assessed the effect of such import on domestic price of agricultural commodities;

(e) if so, the details; and

(f) the steps taken / being taken to curb the adverse effect of import of agricultural commodities?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY)

(a) to (f) : Import restrictions on items including agricultural products are being removed as a part of economic liberalization programme of the Government and also in terms of our International obligations. At present, all the items on which import restrictions were maintained on account of balance of payment reasons are freely importable.

A statement showing import of major agricultural commodities during April-October, 2001, for which data is available, compared with April-October, 2000 is enclosed at annexure. As can be seen from the import data, this level of imports may not have any serious impact on the domestic prices of agricultural commodities.

The removal of restrictions has not altered the overall rate of growth of imports of the country. The growth rate of imports was 15.3% in 1993-94, 23.1% in 1994-95, 36.4% in 1995-96, 13.2% in 1996-97, 11% in 1997-98, 14.2% in 1998-99 and 13.6% in 1999-2000(in rupee. terms). The import growth rate during the year 2000-2001 was only 5.59% in rupee terms and 0.27% in US dollar terms. The growth rate of imports during the first nine months of this financial year was only 0.31% in Dollar terms and 4.55% in Rs. terms, compared to the same period last year. The import data for 714 items, QRs on which were removed on 31.03.2000, for the year 2000-2001, indicates a growth in import of these items by less than 6%. Similarly, the import of 300 sensitive items, which is being monitored by a Standing Group of Secretaries, has also not indicated any unusual surge in the first nine months of this financial year.

However imports are being closely monitored and the Government is determined to ensure through appropriate use of tariff and other mechanisms that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic farmers. Towards that end, import duties on a number of items, where increases in imports were noticed, have already been increased. In the budget for the year 2000-2001, import of duties on many of the agricultural items, (Chapter 1 to 24 of ITC(HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1997-2002), have been increased to provide further protection to domestic farmers, e.g. duty on rice has been increased from 0% to upto 80%, on maize from 0% to 50%, on apples from 35% to 50%, on wheat raised to 50%. Similarly, in the budget for the year 2001-2002, the custom duty on coconut, copra, tea and coffee has been raised from 35% to 70%. The import duty on various refined edible oils excepting soyabean oil has been raised upto 85%. Similarly, the import duty on crude palmolein oil has been raised to 65% and on other crude edible oils excepting soyabean oil duty has been raised upto 75%.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO PARTS (a) to (f) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 197 FOR ANSWER 01.03.2002 REGARDING IMPORT OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

Import of major agricultural commodities during April-October, 2000 & April- October, 2001

Qty. in tones
Value in Rs. Crore.

Sl.No.	Items	Apr-Oct. 00	Apr-Oct. 01

	QUANTITY	VALUE	QUANTITY	VALUE
1. WHEAT	3353	2.26	1351	0.84
2. RICE	5890	7.83	62	0.06
3. OTHER CEREALS	29991	14.96	3849	2.00
4. PULSES	146663	234.21	1165044	1685.37
5. TEA	6068	11.63	6218	35.98
6. CASHEW NUTS	18867	75.12	78.77	18.88
7 FRUITS & NUTS EXCL CASHEW NUTS	N.A.	420.63	N.A.	353.40
8. SPICES	23345	140.48	36899	232.27
9. SUGAR	22313	20.96	26529	32.43
10. OIL SEEDS	N.A.	4.25	N.A.	0.98
11. NATURAL RUBBER	6722	23.40	25104	76.97
12. JUTE, RAW	34031	38.74	33558	38.90
13. SILK, RAW	2722	262.45	5177	317.23
14. COTTON RAW: COMB./UNCOMB./WASTE	177147	964.45	236721	1329.49